

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 00365 230938Z
ACTION SS-25

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R 230330Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9132

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 0365

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2, 3
TAGS: SNAR LA
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS

REF: STATE 73550

1. EMBASSY VIENTIANE WELCOMES THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS TO RAISE THE ISSUE OF NARCOTICS WITH THE LAO. AS YOU ARE AWARE, WE HAD RECOMMENDED IN VIENTIANE 0241 THAT A REVIEW BE MADE OF ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON LPDR COMPLICITY IN ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING WITH A VIEW TO TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION.

2. HOWEVER, AS THE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO AWARE, DEA IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN A POTENTIALLY HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT OPERATION (OPERATION EMERALD) WHICH, IF IT COMES OFF, COULD MAKE ANY DEMARCHE ON THIS SUBJECT WITH THE LAO FAR MORE TELLING. WITHOUT THE POSITIVE PROOF OF LAO TRAFFICKING COMPLICITY WHICH WE HOPE THIS OPERATION WILL PRODUCE, THE EMBASSY IS AFRAID THAT A DEMARCHE AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME MIGHT BE INNORED. IN ADDITION, AN UNSUPPORTED DEMARCHE WOULD PROBABLY BE INTERPRETED BY THE LAO AS SIMPLY PART OF A CAMPAIGN OF ILL-TEMPER AND HARASSMENT ON THE PART OF THE USG, SINCE WITHIN THE PAST WEEK WE HAVE UPBRAIDED THEM FOR THE PRIME MINIS-

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TER'S CHARGE ABOUT REACTIVATED US BASES IN THAILAND AND WE HAVE TAKEN THEM TO TASK FOR THEIR LACK OF ACTION ON MIA'S (VIENTIANE 0349 AND 0350). STATE 072601, WHICH WE RECEIVED MARCH 22, AUTHORIZED US TO PROTEST THE LATEST LAO TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON DIPLOMATS.

3. ACCORDINGLY, UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT HAS AN OBJECTION,

WE WOULD LIKE TO INTERPRET THE PHRASE IN OUR INSTRUCTIONS "AT THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY" AS MEANING WE CAN WAIT UNTIL THE RESULTS OF OPERATION EMERALD ARE EVIDENT AND UNTIL THE ILL EFFECTS OF OUR APPROACHES ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH, MIA'S AND TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO BLOW OVER. A DEMARCHE A WEEK OR TWO FROM NOW WOULD BE MUCH MORE TELLING AND EFFECTIVE THAN IF WE WENT IN DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS.
ROBERTS

SECRET

NNN

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